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Complaints and expectations of patients who admitted to dental faculty hospital

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ABSTRACT

Aims: This study aimed to determine the purpose of hospital admission and their expectations from the hospital of patients who were first-time admitted to the Faculty of Dentistry Hospital. Thus, it was aimed to determine the awareness of patients about dental health and raise awareness among healthcare professionals.

Methods: This cross-sectional study, which was conducted among 100 patients who were first-time admitted to Cukurova University Faculty of Dentistry Hospital, was carried out with a data collection form. The data collection form consisted of 3 section, including demographic information, reasons for hospital admission, and questions about expectations from the hospital. Categorical data were summarized as percentages and numbers. The Chi-square test statistic was used to determine the patient characteristics that influenced the expectation questions. P value <0.05 was considered statistical significance.

Results: The mean age of the patients, consisting of 52 women and 48 men, was 34.87 years. The vast majority of patients (89%) had social insured and more than half were students (39%) or housewives (19%). It was found that patients often admitted to hospital for dental caries, severe toothache and tooth extraction. The questions with the most agreement in the expectation questions was the ease of access to the hospital and the cleanliness of all units, with a response rate of 37%. Female patients had higher expectations of hygiene and safety from the hospital compared to male patients (29% vs. 2.2%). Patients who were transferred due to trauma mostly marked the option that nurses should be able to assist the patient in case of an emergency (transferred: 23.8%, non-transferred: 2.7%).

Conclusion: Although the majority of patients who were admitted to the Faculty of Dentistry hospital came when a toothache started and admission as tooth extraction, the presence of patients who were came for general check-ups is promising.

Keywords: Dental hospital, patient, complaint

* This study was presented as an oral presentation at the International Aegean Health Areas Symposium (2021).

INTRODUCTION

Healthcare services are an important indicator of a country's socioeconomic development level.[1] The main goal of healthcare services is to provide the health services it needed to the community at the quality and time desired by the patient and at the lowest possible cost. The healthcare sector is among the most problematic institutions when it comes to meeting patients' expectations.[2]

In recent years, more studies have been conducted to determine the quality of healthcare services.[3] High quality in the healthcare sector is defined as meeting the expectations and needs of service recipients. Therefore, it is important to take patients' views into account when evaluating the service provided and ensuring continuity of service. The World Health Organization's (WHO) "World Health Report 2000, Health Systems: Improving Performance" report includes meeting patient expectations as one of the three main goals of healthcare systems.[4]

Current researches is increasingly focused on the impact of psychosocial factors on clinical treatment outcomes. It has been found that expectancy, which is an important psychological factor, generally affect the patient's evaluation of treatment quality or satisfaction with the treatment outcome.[5] What patients think may influence what happens during clinical treatment. When the discrepancy between expectations and reality increases, it can affect the course of dental treatment. Unmet expectations can lead to dissatisfaction, while a positive attitude can increase the success of the treatment.[6]

Improving the quality of healthcare services can be achieved by reducing the number of patients admitted to hospitals.[7] In this context, factors such as raising society's awareness, preventing diseases through appropriate measures, and strengthening preventive medical activity are gaining importance. In the field of dentistry, patients should adopt important habits for dental health, such as brushing and flossing their teeth, avoiding caries-causing foods and beverages, and visiting the dental check-up every six months.[8]

This study aimed to determine the purpose of hospital admission and their expectations from the hospital of patients who were first-time admitted to the Faculty of

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Dentistry Hospital. In addition, determining patients' level of knowledge about dental health and raising awareness for healthcare professionals are secondary purposes.

METHODS

A total of 100 patients aged 16-65 years who were first-time admitted to Çukurova University (CU) Faculty of Dentistry Hospital and able to make their own decisions were included in this cross-sectional study.

The data collection form was made for each participant by face-to-face interview technique. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from Çukurova University Faculty of Medicine Medical Ethics Committee (Date: 09.03.2019, Decision No: 106). Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

The data collection form was composed of three sections:

The first section included patients' demographic information, including gender, age, health insurance, education level, occupation, presence of a healthcare professional in the family, whether they were students or employees of the university, and whether they were referred from another institution.

The second part included the reasons for hospitalisation, such as general control, dental cleaning, gum diseases, caries, tooth sensitivity, severe toothache, tooth extraction, trauma, dental prosthesis, orthodontic treatment, aesthetic expectations (smile aesthetics) and intraoral wound or disease.

The third section included questions related to patients' expectations from the hospital, healthcare services, non-healthcare personnel, healthcare professionals, and physicians (**Table 1**). The patients were asked to mark the two options they considered most important for each question.

Statistical Analysis

The IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.0 package program (IBM Corp. Armonk, NY, USA) was used for statistical analysis of the data. Categorical measurements were presented as numbers and percentages. Chi-square test were used to determine the patient characteristics that influenced the patients' primary expectations (the first two preferences) for the questions about the hospital and its staff. P value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

A total of 100 patients participated in the study, of which 52 were female and 48 were male. The youngest patient in the study was 16 years old, while the oldest was 65 years old. The mean age of the patients was 34.87 years. The social security and education status of the patients is summarized in **Figure 1**, while their professions are summarized in **Figure 2**.

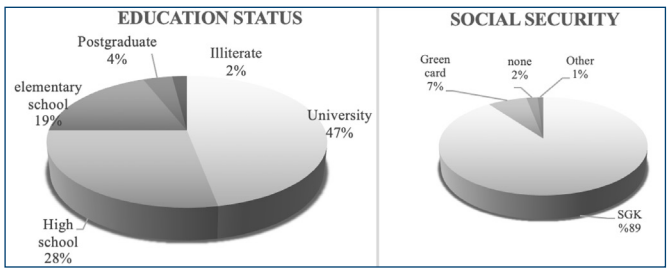

Figure 1. Social security and educational status of patients participating in the study.

Table 1. The questions in the third part of the data collection form on patients' expectations of the hospital, health service, non-health staff, healthcare professionals and physicians.

What are your expectations from our hospital?
Access to the hospital should be easy (near bus stops and the hospital)
All areas of the hospital (e.g., the treatment clinic, waiting rooms, and restrooms) should be clean
The waiting area in the hospital should be spacious and have enough seating.
Areas such as canteen, infant care room, prayer room should be available in the hospital.
The hospital must be equipped for emergencies (fire, earthquake, etc.)
What are your expectations of our hospital's health services?
Patients should receive an appointment as soon as possible.
The patient should arrive on time on the day of the appointment and enough time should be allowed.
The most advanced treatment for the patient should be done with the highest quality materials.
Because of the complications that can occur (after the treatment e.g., the filling out, hitting the prosthesis, the face swelling), the patient should be treated without waiting again.
Satisfaction, suggestions and complaints about the hospital or the staff should be possible without any problems.
What are your expectations from our hospital non-health staff?
Secretarial, information, security and cleaning staff should be respectful, smiling and courteous.
All hospital staff should answer patients' questions in their area of responsibility.
Procedures such as registration, registration, making appointments should be handled expeditiously by staff.
Staff should be at the duty station during working hours and should be concerned only with their work.
If necessary, disabled, sick and elderly patients should be accompanied
What are your expectations from our hospital healthcare professionals?
All health care workers (nurses and aids) should be polite, smiling, and helpful.
Nurses should be able to assist patients in emergencies.
Treatment times should be shortened by having an adequate number of nurses and aids.
They must have a general knowledge of the specialty to be able to answer the patient's questions
Patient privacy should be maintained during examination and treatment.
What do you expect from our hospital interns and specialists?
Physicians must be caring, smiling, hardworking and professionally equipped
Physicians should listen to patients' complaints and consider their expectations.
Physician should spare time and examine the patient in detail.
Physician should educate the patient about the disease and its treatment and obtain consent for treatment.
Depending on the patient's condition, the specialist physician should take care of the patient instead of the intern.

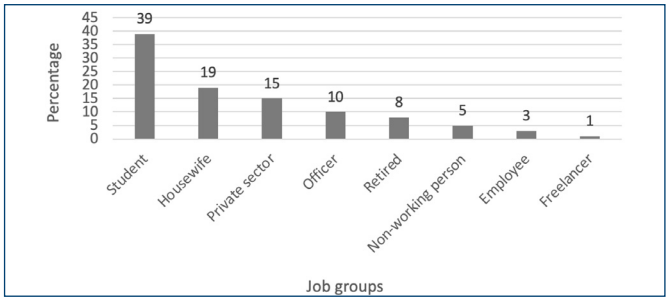

Figure 1. Occupations of the patients participating in the study.

In response to the question, "Do you have a healthcare worker in your family?", 20% of patients answered "Yes". To the question "Are you a student or employee of the CU?", 23% answered "Yes", and to the question "Did you come to our hospital with a referral?", 22% answered "Yes". The most frequently marked responses and their numbers to the question "What is the reason for your hospital admission?" are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Complaints and numbers of patients admitted to dental faculty hospital.

Patient complaint	n	Patient complaint	n
Severe toothache	20	Tooth extraction	20
Tooth decay	19	General control	14
dental prosthesis	10	Trauma	7
Gum diseases	7	Implant	6
Orthodontic treatment	5	Tooth sensitivity	3
Cyst	2	Aesthetic expectation	2
Teeth cleaning	2	Intraoral wound, disease, etc.	1

In response to the question "What are your expectations from hospital?", the combination of "The hospital should be easily accessible (with bus stops near to the hospital), and all units of the hospital (treatment clinic, waiting rooms, and toilets) should be clean" was marked by 37% of patients.

A statistically significant difference was found between female and male in their expectations from the hospital. Female's expectations were mostly related to hygiene and safety (female: 29.4%, male: 2.2%), while men's expectations were related to easy access to the hospital and a spacious waiting room with sufficient seating (male: 22.2%, female: 7.8%).

In response to the question "What are your expectations from the healthcare services of our hospital?", the combination of "Patients should be given appointments as soon as possible, and patients should be treated without delay in case of complications after treatment (such as fillings falling out, prostheses hitting, and facial swelling)" was marked by 28% of the patients.

In response to the question "What are your expectations from our non-healthcare personnel?", the combination of "Secretaries, receptionists, security, and cleaning staff should be respectful, cheerful, and polite" and "Procedures such as applications, registrations, and appointments should be performed quickly by staff" was marked by 22% of patients.

In response to the question "What are your expectations from our healthcare professionals?", the combination of "All healthcare workers (nurses and assistants) should be kind, cheerful, and helpful", and "Sufficient numbers of nurses and assistants should be provided to shorten treatment times" was marked by 26% of patients. For this question, a statistically significant difference was found between patients who came to the hospital with a referral and those who did not. Patients who came to the hospital with a referral were more often marked the asnwer "Nurses should be able to help patients in case of an emergency" (referred: 23.8%, non-referred: 2.7%). It was also found that the reasons for admission of referred patients were mostly trauma-related.

In response to the question "What are your expectations from our intern doctors and specialist doctors?", the combination of "Doctors should listen to patients' complaints and take their expectations into account, and doctors should inform patients about their illness disease and treatment and obtain their approval for treatment" was marked by 14% of the patients.

DISCUSSION

When people perceive a deterioration in their health, they exhibit various behaviors. In general, the patient's understanding of health is shaped by their beliefs, fears, anxieties, and expectations, which encompass their experiences. It is the responsibility of health professionals to address patients' fears. Healthcare professionals can make some mistakes in their daily practices when it comes to what needs to be done for the patient. Among the most important ones are interrupting patients, not listening to their views, and not taking into account their expectations.[9] There are some studies in the literature that focus on patients' expectations and preferences.[10,11] However, very little research has been done on this topic in our country. In a study conducted in Elazig, where the perceived service quality of four hospitals in the city center was measured and compared using the Servqual scale, it was found that the hospitals did not meet patients' expectations.[12]

Healthcare services provided by health care facilities are inherently prone to errors, and not every patient leaves fully satisfied. While some of these situations may be unavoidable in hospitals, others are due to rights violations. Inadequacies in the healthcare system are the primary cause of these violations, while others are the fault of patients and healthcare professionals. Factors such as modern equipment, dentist and assistant approach, quality of treatment, pain control, waiting time, dentist accessibility, and time allotted for treatment are all factors that affect patient satisfaction. Healthcare facilities should incorporate patient satisfaction into their quality management policies. Although measuring and evaluating patient satisfaction can be challenging, it is critical to the development of the healthcare sector.

A study conducted at Giresun State Hospital on patient satisfaction with oral and dental healthcare services reported that patient satisfaction with the services received did not differ by age, gender, place of residence, education level, occupation, and social security status.[15] The higher the income and education level, the higher the satisfaction expectation. The most important reason for preferring the polyclinic was that they had been there before and were satisfied with the services. The most important reason for satisfaction was the good relationship between patient and doctor, while low price was another reason for low-income patients.

Some studies have compared patient satisfaction between State and Private hospitals in Turkey.[16] A previous study concluded that participants were generally more satisfied with Private hospitals than with State hospitals, but that Private hospitals also had some shortcomings.

In a study assessing Oral and Dental Health-Related Quality of Life and Oral Health Impact Profile in Turkey, patients' gender, marital status, age, education level, and reasons for admission to the hospital were examined, and these factors were found to have significant effects. It was found that female had lower scores than male on these scales. The illiterate group had lower oral health-related quality of life. Individuals who were admitted to hospital for gum problems, tooth decay, and prosthesis treatment had the lowest mean scores.[17]

When the results of this study were examined, it was found that the majority of patients who were admitted to hospital came for toothache and admitted for tooth extraction. This indicated that patients are not adequately awareness about oral hygiene. Since the vast majority of patients in the study were young (mean age: 34.87 years), the proportion of patients who were admitted for prosthetic treatment was lower than expected.

A previous study examined the difference between service quality expectations and experiences of patients who were admitted to Dental Training Hospital was examined using a modified version of the Parasuraman Servqual model. It was found that 11.6% of respondents had problems related to service, and the most important reason given was reliability,

especially for women. While the service expectations of participants without academic qualifications were lower, those of professional individuals were more realistic.[18] Another study on measuring patients' expectations of dental services showed that the patient's expectation for the clinical environment received the highest score, followed by dental human factors. Convenience of transportation from the patient's home to the clinic was found to be an important factor in the use of from dental services.[19]

This study is consistent with the literature. Consensus was reached on the questions regarding expectations, with ease of transportation and cleanliness of the hospital being the most important. In addition, it was found that female placed more importance on cleanliness and reliability, while male placed more importance on transportation and comfort.

A previous study conducted at a dental school hospital in the United Kingdom examined what patients expected from emergency dental services. Although their first desire was to get rid of the pain, they also wanted reassurance that the problem was not serious and information about the cause of their pain. Effective and sensitive communication between dentists and patients may be even more important during emergency consultations than in other clinical situations. In addition, it was emphasized that the dentist's skills of listening, explaining, and reassuring are more important for this patient population.[20]

In this study, the number of patients presenting with trauma, which is an urgent condition, was higher than the expected rate (7 per 100 individuals). This may indicate that patients presenting with trauma were more likely to be referred to the university than to local oral and dental health centres. It was found that these patients were statistically more likely to mark the option "Nurses should be able to assist help patients in emergency" in their expectations from healthcare professionals. Consistent with the literature, this may be due to these patients' desire to feel safe.

In healthcare, the "Green" concept has emerged and it is gaining popularity.[21] The use of green practices in healthcare facilities, such as effective use of energy, water, and resources, prevention of waste, effective waste management, and quality interior and environmental management, is important not only in terms of cost benefits but also to improve public health. A previous study[22] aimed to provide literature information on the implementation of the green hospital concept in the world and in Turkey, to examine the expectations of employees, patients, and their relatives regarding green hospital features in a public hospital in Istanbul, and to investigate whether these expectations differ according to demographic characteristics. The result showed that hospital users had a high level of awareness and expectations regarding green hospital features. According to the results, it was determined that both hospital staff and service users considered not only the physical structure where treatment is provided, but also how they use natural resources and energy to be important. This study can be improved by integrating green concepts in healthcare into the expectation questions.

CONCLUSION

The high incidence of severe toothache, dental caries, and tooth extraction as the reasons for hospital admission indicated that patients do not give enough importance to oral and dental health. Efforts should be made to increase patients' awareness. However, the presence of patients who come for general check-ups is also promising. Patients' expectations, as observed in this study, should create awareness among hospital management and staff. This study can be improved by increasing the number of patients attending the oral and dental health hospital and assessing their satisfaction after treatment.

ETHICAL DECLARATIONS

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethical approval for the study was obtained from Çukurova University Faculty of Medicine Medical Ethics Committee (Date: 09.03.2019, Decision No: 106).

Informed Consent: All patients signed the free and informed consent form.

Referee Evaluation Process: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Author Contributions: All of the authors declare that they have all participated in the design, execution, and analysis of the paper, and that they have approved the final version.

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